

LIFE HISTORY OF CORNELIUS PETER LOTT

Typed by Kathleen J. Woolf Oct. 2002

Cornelius Peter Lott, the only child of Pieter Lott and Mary Jane Smiley Lott, was born September 27, 1798, in New York City, New York.

His birth came at the same period as the birth of our nation. The Declaration of Independence had been signed; the Revolutionary War had been fought; the surrender of Cornwallis of Yorktown and the Peace Treaty with England had been ratified. Thus a newly established democracy was born. Cornelius Peter Lott, too, came into his being at this time. He was of English and Dutch decent, whose forebears had left European countries in pursuit of happiness and freedom and a land of greater opportunities. Here in America their hopes were realized. His Lott ancestors immigrated to this country in 1652 from Ruinenvold, Drenthe, Holland and settled in Flatbush, L.I., New York.

His grandfather was Captain Cornelius Lott (1738-1816.)

Cornelius was taught to work with his hands, and taught that hard work helps to build a strong character. He was taught to be obedient. When given a task it was to be completed with the greatest of care. This lesson he always remembered, and he was always conscientious about his work. He was also taught to be fair and honest in his dealings with others, a lesson he instilled in his own children when they came along.

Cornelius spent his youth in New York and Pennsylvania. He loved the soil and liked to farm; he loved animals and took great pride in them.

When he was 24 years of age, he married Permelia Darrow, in Bridgewater, Luzern County (Susquehanna??) Pennsylvania, April 27, 1823. She was a very quite, well-mannered and educated young woman. She was the daughter of Joseph Darrow and Mary Ward Darrow, and the granddaughter of General Ward (1727-1800), and Captain Darrow, both of revolutionary fame.

A farmer's life occupied the attention of this newly organized home. Children came along to bless their home. Melissa was born January 9, 1824, then John Smiley March 23, 1826. Mary Elizabeth was born November 9, 1827 and Almira Henrietta on December 15, 1829. Permellia Jane, October 2, 1832, Alzina Lucinda March 4, 1834 and Harriet Amanda March 3, 1836.

Times were hard and Cornelius moved from one place to another where he could make a living for his family of small children.

During this time the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had been restored to the earth and Cornelius and Permelia had become interested, studying and learning all they could about this new church.

In 1837 the gospel net of the Church gathered into its fold their family. Living in Kirtland, with the main body of the Saints, and participating in the social and the religious activities of the people, in comparison, had been but dreams, now was much appreciated.

This was a time of strife in Kirtland. The terrific national panic of 1847 was reaping vengeance, hatred and contention among the people. Kirtland, Ohio was designated as headquarters of the Church, and as many of the members as could, gathered there. But they were being persecuted by mobs from every side, who burned their homes, and in some instances even murdered them in cold blood.

Feeling a great need to protect their interests, a meeting was called and an organization called the "Kirtland Safety Society" was formed. Sidney Rigdon was chairman, with Warren Parish as Secretary. The meeting adopted articles of agreement by which the "Kirtland Safety Society" was to be governed.

We the undersigned subscribers, for the promotion of our different occupations, which consisted of agriculture, mechanical arts, and merchandising, do hereby form ourselves into a firm or company for the before mentioned objects; by the name of "Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company" for the proper management of said firm. Cornelius P. Lott was a member of this organization. He was always ready and willing to do all he could to help build a better community, as well as help protect the interests of the Saints.

The Saints were persecuted beyond endurance and were finally driven from their homes in Kirtland in the dead of winter. They had been driven out of civilization into the wilderness and a flaming sword of hate had been placed, which was turned every way against the refugees.

All ties of the past had been sundered. They were so poor that their utmost hopes were to secure the merest necessities of life. Such was their condition as they took up their westward march, with what few things they could in their wagons, such as food, clothing and bedding, leaving all of their personal belongings to be taken by the mobs that ravaged their homes or to be burned. Some drove a team of oxen, some with one horse and one cow, or one horse and one ox to pull their wagons.

Being driven by ruthless, relentless persecution, hundreds of them perished during the winter from hunger and cold.

In sunshine and in storm they pressed on their weary journey. Their teams grew steadily weaker, more and more obstructions were interposed in their path, but they never faltered. They learned to economize the food and clothing and to smile at hardships and fatigue. The toil of the day made a bed on the prairie seem as soft as down when they sank to sleep. One thing in common all of these people had in their search for freedom to worship God - a schooling in hardship, persecution and sacrifice. God has never worked out his purposes through pampered victims of ease and luxury and riotous living.

Always He has used to meet the great crises in His work, those in whom hardship, privation and persecution had built characters and wills of iron.

It was slow traveling, averaging about fifteen miles per day. There were no roads for them to follow. They made their own trails through sagebrush, grass and thistles. It was rough and hard for the oxen to pull the wagons and it was also hard on those who had to walk. The women's long skirts catching on the brush and cheat grass. But they never faltered. Their faith was strong and they knew where they wanted to go. They knew too, when they arrived in the valley of the mountains, their hardships would not be over. There would be nothing there to welcome them but desert, sagebrush and the howl of the coyote. There would be much hard work and more sacrifice to make it livable, but they wanted peace and happiness and the privilege of worshiping God in their own way. So they trudged on day after day. In the winter it was cold and snow. In the summer it was the heat and the dust, but they never complained regardless of the hardships they went through. They were always ready to share each other's sorrows or happiness. Many of the women walked carrying their babies in their arms much of the way. They always stopped to rest on Sundays and hold their meetings.

August 26, 1838 was a Sunday. They stopped and a public meeting was held in the Kirtland Camp in the forenoon and a Sacrament meeting was held in the afternoon, then they rested so they would be ready to resume their journey.

August 27, 1838 the men of the Kirtland Camp made every possible exertion to continue their journey on the next day, by shoeing horses, and fixing wagons. They had a blacksmith shop in operation in camp for several days, doing the necessary work. The dust had been so bad they were afraid they would not be able to travel, but that evening a heavy shower of rain fell, which was greatly needed. The Lord had been merciful to them before and so He was in this instance. They were thankful for the beautiful rain that came to settle the dust and make their traveling so much easier.

On October 6, 1838 a quarterly conference of the Saints was called and convened at 10:00 AM. President Young presiding and President Marsh conducting. Elder Benjamin L. Clapp said he had just returned from Kentucky where he had been laboring as a missionary, and said that many doors were opened to him there. People were anxious to hear the gospel. A call was made for volunteers to go into the vineyard to carry the Gospel message to these people. Elders James Carroll, James Galliher, Luman A. Shurtliff, James Dana, Ahaz Cook, Isaac Decker, Cornelius Peter Lott and Alpheus Gifford volunteered to go. President Marsh instructed them not to go forth boasting of their faith or of the judgments of the Lord, but to go in the spirit of meekness.

This missionary movement at a time when it may be said that the whole country was "up in arms" against the Church and its fortunes were apparently desperate, is truly an astonishing thing. And yet, such missionary movements have become quite characteristic of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Its fortunes have never been at so low an ebb but what it could always undertake some great missionary enterprise.

When apostasy was rife in Kirtland the powers of darkness seemed massed for its overthrow, the Prophet “to save the Church” organized and sent forth a mission to Great Britain.

In 1850 when the body of the Mormon people had been expatriated from their country and fled into the desert wilderness of the Rocky Mountains and when it was generally supposed that the world had practically seen the last of Mormonism, and yet thousands of their people were yet to gather from the east, where they were in a scattered condition and the very existence of the people to human eyes seemed precarious, yet a world wide mission was organized and members of the Quorum of apostles were sent from the Church in the wilderness into foreign countries to proclaim the truth and assure that to perfect the lives of those who received its message.

The members of this newly organized Church were being persecuted in every way possible. Their homes burned, their children beaten and finally driven from their homes. Upon the expulsion of the Saints from Kirtland, the Lott family moved to Missouri and located near “Hauns Mill Massacre”. From there they moved to Pike County, Illinois. Here another child came to bless their home. Peter Lyman was born November 2, 1842. Here they lived but a short time then moved to Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois.

The intervening four years were full of desperate depredations against the Latter-day Saints. Upon the escape of the Prophet from the Liberty Jail the wandering exiles were gathered at Commerce and immediately commenced building what became the most beautiful city of Illinois - Nauvoo, the beautiful. Here too, they built the beautiful Nauvoo Temple.

Three miles from the city of Nauvoo is located the historical Joseph Smith farm. One-half section of prairie land fenced, with an eight room dwelling, four rooms upstairs and four rooms downstairs, and a barn suitably equipped with the essentials to make the homestead an admiration of the Prophet and a special attraction to the extensive travelers passing through the largest city in the state in the direction of Carthage, Quincy, Monmouth and the further east.

In 1842 Cornelius P. Lott became superintendent of this beautiful farm and Permelia Darrow Lott became landlady of the dwelling. This roomy house was none too extensive for the growing family. Much of the land was prairie land and had to be broken up by strong teams, consisting of four or five yoke of oxen. The Prophet’s visit at the farm provided almost daily contact with the Lott family. The children were happy to see him and most always met him on his approach. He was very kind and patient with them and they all loved him.

Between the Smith and Lott families a warm and neighborly feeling existed. The children attended the same school. Melissa chaperoned the smaller and younger Smith children and at times made her home with the Prophet’s wife. On September 20, 1843 Melissa was given in marriage, by her father, to the Prophet Joseph Smith. She was

married and sealed for time and eternity to him, by his brother Hyrum Smith, in his office above the brick store by the river.

Not only did Cornelius Lott labor diligently, and successfully to supervise the important farm the Prophet Joseph had entrusted to him, but he entered in with the greatest interest and physical support, all of the important projects in building the city of Nauvoo. He labored faithfully in helping to erect their most beloved structure, the Nauvoo Temple.

All of the male members of the Church living around Nauvoo spent as much time as possible working on the beautiful Temple, and the women did their part also. They would prepare food and take to the men who were working on the Temple. Cornelius and his family had the great satisfaction of seeing the finished, painted, carpeted and equipped building with the necessary furnishings. It was then dedicated for the use of the Saints to fulfill certain ordinances and receive their endowments, thus securing for themselves an inheritance in the eternal world. Love, union and peace were never more universal among the Saints in Nauvoo than at this time.

December 10, 1845, at 4:25 PM President Young and Heber C. Kimball commenced administering the ordinances of endowment. Cornelius P. Lott was with the first group to enter the room. They assembled for prayer. After the prayer Cornelius left so that he might join the second group with his wife. The endowing of the first group went far into the night. President Young and Heber C. Kimball went to the home of Joseph C. Kingbury for breakfast. Without taking any rest or sleep, they returned to the Temple to resume the work of administering the sacred ordinances to the second group to receive them. Among the second group were Cornelius and his wife Permelia, with their good friend, mother Lucy Mack Smith. The work administering the endowments went on almost continuously until the Saints departed for the west two months later.

The Prophet spent as much time as possible on the farm. He would work along with Cornelius hoeing potatoes or doing other kinds of work. They had many long and wonderful talks while they worked. Cornelius said, "He knew the Prophet Joseph was a man of God. You couldn't help but feel his influence when you were with him. He was so humble and yet so dynamic." Cornelius gained a strong testimony of the Gospel that never left him.

There were many times when the Prophet feared for his life. At one time he came into the Lott home, as Permelia was making her bed, and said, "Sister Lott, you must hide me, the mob is after me." Permelia shook her straw tick up, then parted the straw in the middle, pushing the straw well to the sides. She then told him to climb inside the tick and not to move, and whatever he did not to sneeze. Then she put a little straw over him and made up the bed. The men came running in and asked if she had seen him. Then they asked if they could search her home. Permelia said, "Certainly, if you would like." Then they asked her if that was the first bed she had made this morning, and she answered "Yes, do you want me to take it apart so we can see it?" They looked a little embarrassed and said, "No, never mind," but they did look in the other rooms while

Permelia stood guard by the bed. When they were satisfied the Prophet was not there, they left, and the Prophet came out of the hiding place.

The Prophet visited and dined in the home of Cornelius Peter Lott and his family often. Their testimony of the Gospel grew and became stronger after each visit, and they became more humble.

The terrible mobbings, plunderings and depredations committed in and around Nauvoo became almost beyond description. As the Prophet, after again being arrested, and his escorts were leaving Nauvoo on their way to Carthage, when passing the farm he lingered and in a depressed mood remarked, "Who would ever want to leave a place like this," knowing that he would never see it again. He bade a fond goodbye to the sorrowing employees, whom he had so often visited and learned to love and gave encouragement to. Fifty times he had been arrested on trumped up charges and forty nine times he had been acquitted by the courts of the land, innocent of any crime. Finally the mob maddened that "If law could not reach him, powder and ball should."

The news of the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph and his brother Hyrum, June 27, 1844, was the climax of all the Satanic evils that had been committed before. The Saints were all overcome with sorrow. The Lott's had not only lost a leader and a friend of long standing but their daughter Melissa had lost her husband of just nine months.

The Saints were stunned at the loss of their leader; they were at a loss wondering what to do. They could not, and would not turn back, but who would be their leader? Who would guide and direct them that they might continue on in the work of the Lord? The Prophet and Patriarch being slain was preposterous. The Church had been restored never to be taken from the earth again.

A special meeting was called, to be held on Thursday, August 8, 1844. The members of the Church were all urged to be in attendance. Among others, Brigham Young addressed the great multitude of Saints assembled there. He spoke with great power. When he first arose to speak the Saints were greatly astonished. President Young stood transfigured before them, and they beheld the Prophet Joseph Smith, and heard his voice as plainly as ever they did when he was living among them. Cornelius and Parmelia Lott were among the Saints gathered there. Alzina Lott, their young daughter 11 years of age turned to her mother and said, "Mama, I thought the Prophet was dead." Her mother answered and said, "He is Alzina, and this is the way our Heavenly Father has told us who is to be our next leader and Prophet."

While living in Nauvoo, Cornelius was ordained a High Priest on January 22, 1845.

On January 22, 1846, Cornelius Peter Lott took another wife. He was married and sealed in the Nauvoo Temple to Rebecca Fausett. Rebecca had been engaged to be married to Isaiah Barkdull, but he had taken ill and died. She was a lovely young girl, but still in love with the man she had been engaged to, and wanted to be sealed for

eternity to him, so her marriage to Cornelius did not last too long. She left Cornelius and went back to live with her parents. Their marriage and sealing was later dissolved. She had one son, whom she name Isaiah Barkdull Lott, whom Cornelius never saw.

Mob violence did not cease with the martyrdom of the Prophet and his brother Hyrum. They continued to harass and persecute the Latter-day Saints until finally they had to enter into a compulsory agreement, or written compact, to leave the state of Illinois, and go farther west, where it was hoped by their enemies they would perish. Their right to worship as their conscience dictated led them to seek a new refuge. They would find it in the valleys of the mountains, a thousand miles from those who might molest them, those who hated and persecuted them.

The exodus from Nauvoo commenced February 4, 1846. Cornelius P. Lott and his family started west in the first company of Saints, driving a team composed of two cows and two oxen. Their home was to be tents or covered wagons or any makeshift tent to keep out of the storm and away from the wild animals.

On February 22, 1846, a raging blizzard, leaving twelve inches of snow, struck the Mormon pioneers huddled in their temporary camp at sugar Creek, Iowa. Following this terrible storm, the weather turned frigid, twelve below zero, sealing the Mississippi River from shore to shore. One of those nights nine babies were born. Eliza R. Snow told of one birth that occurred in a rude improvised shelter, the sides of which were formed of blankets fastened to poles stuck in the ground. The owner of the hut had peeled bark from cottonwood trees and had made a roof covering through which the water leaked, but helpful sisters held pans over the newborn child and its mother. It was during these adverse conditions that an unknown poet penned this prayer:

God pity the exiles, when storm comes down,
When snow-laden clouds hang low on the ground.
When the chill blast of winter with frost on its breath,
And the voice of the father breaks down in his prayer.
When the sharp cry of childbirth is heard on the air,
As he pleads with Jehovah, his loved one to spare.

Many of the saints lost their lives during this storm. The sick, the old and many of the children were not strong enough to stand the severe cold and storm. Many were left by the wayside in shallow graves dug in the frozen ground with crude, handmade tools, with nothing to mark their last resting place. The grief was heart rending as parents buried their little ones or families were left without father or mother, than had to continue on their journey, after placing rocks on the graves or lighting a fire on them to keep the wild animals away from their loved ones.

One hundred and sixty miles west of the Mississippi was established Mount Pisgah, a temporary settlement for raising grain and assisting the thousands of Saints who were on the westward move. Houses were built; wells were dug' fences were built and hundreds of acres were planted.

On June 28, 1846, a severe storm had come up during the night, but when morning came it was quite pleasant. Cloudy with a light east wind. About 11 AM Thomas J. Williams arrived with the mail of eleven letters, he reported the mob following the Saints was within fifteen miles. There had been severe rains during the night, some of the bridges were gone and others were afloat, which would slow the progress of the Saints. Cornelius Lott, Alpheus Cutler and Reynolds Cahoon were on one side of the river and Wilford Woodruff on the other side. Materials had to be gathered and bridges repaired so they could cross, where they would be safe from the pursuing mob.

On August 7, 1846, Cornelius Peter Lott was appointed to the High Council to take charge of the affairs of the church on the west side of the Missouri River.

On the 18th of November 1846, President Brigham Young met with the twelve apostles and the High Council. President Young made some remarks relative to the propriety and necessity of the High Council taking care of the church property. Bishop Newel K. Whitney, Albert P. Rockwood, William Clayton, Cornelius P. Lott and John Scott were appointed to ascertain the situation and condition of the church property in camp. The skill in farming and handling the prairie soil that Cornelius possessed detained him in his westward travel for the years of 1846-1847.

Sadness came to the home of Cornelius and Permelia Lott in October of 1847, when they lost two of their children in ten days. Harriet Amanda died October 5, 1847 at the age of eleven years, and Joseph Darrow died October 15, 1847, at the age of nine years. They had two children born to them and now had lost three children in the time they had been on the plains. They had also lost one grandchild, son of John Smiley Lott and Mary Ann Fausett Lott.

In the summer of 1848, in the Heber C. Kimball Company, Cornelius Peter Lott and his wife Permelia Darrow Lott started their track west. The Saints divided into companies of ten. Cornelius and family were in the second division and he was captain of ten wagons.

They arrived in Salt Lake, September 23, 1848. Their first home was on the corner of Third South and what is now State Street, where the Centre Theater now stands.

Cornelius built a two-room home there. It was very primitive, but built like so many of the pioneer homes of that time. Rough, unhewn logs with the openings between the timbers daubed with chinking and mud. But it must be large enough to accommodate the father and mother and eight children, and must be completed as soon as possible, as the stork was again hovering around their home. Their eleventh child, Benjamin Smith Lott, was born November 16, 1848. Just one month and twenty-three days after their arrival in the Salt Lake Valley.

For two years this family had been helping at the wayside stations and working their way westward to the mountain valley's among the Saints, where they could rest in

peace. This newly erected structure of two rooms supplemented with wagon boxes, was a far cry from the beautiful eight room mansion, on the Smith farm, they had lived in. But it was their own, and they were thankful for it. Their furniture was homemade, heavy and crude, lacking in the beauty and conveniences of our modern day furniture, but they were happy to be together and have a place to call home.

Cornelius Lott's daughters were growing up and beginning to entertain their boyfriends now, and on November 12, 1848, he saw his second daughter, Mary Elizabeth, married to Abraham Losee, a convert to the church from Canada, whom she had met in the Smith home in Nauvoo. He had worked on the farm with her father. He later saw another daughter, Almira Henrietta, married to John Riggs Murdock on November 13, 1849, another stalwart pioneer.

When winter came and snow was deep the wild beasts and birds, not being able to find food for themselves, became so bad they were a real nuisance. The small amount of food the saints had must last until a crop could be harvested the next summer. They could not spare the food for the wild animals and birds, so the men in the valley decided to try to get rid of them. The men were called together and decided to have a contest. On December 24, 1848, Salt Lake had a severe snowstorm the previous night. Thomas Bullock and John D. Lee wrote out articles of agreement for extermination of birds and beasts and made out a list of 180 names. Cornelius was chosen on the John D. Lee list. Following is the document: *Articles of agreement between Captain John D. Lee and Captain John Pack, made this 24th day of December 1848 to carry on a war of extermination against all the ravens, hawks, owls, wolves, foxes, etc. now alive in the valley of the Great Salt Lake. First is agreed that the two companies shall participate in a social dinner with their ladies to be held in the home of John Pack on a set day and paid for by the company that produces the least number of game.*

Isaac Morley and Reynolds Cahoon shall be the judges or counters of the game, and Thomas Bullock to be the clerk to keep the record of each man's kill. Each bird or animal counted so many points. As long as they had work to do, they thought they might as well have a contest and some fun included, as well as rid the valley of unwanted fowl and animals.

In the spring of 1849 Cornelius was again put in charge of the church farm, known as the Forrest Dale Farm. Here he again did the kind of work he loved and was best suited for.

For twenty-seven years this father and mother were as one in sharing their joys and sorrows. In their many shifting scenes of the past a father's watchful care was always present.

Cornelius Peter Lott was a good father, a good provided, and a good protector. He was not large in stature and had gone prematurely gray, but he was a very big man in the sights and thoughts of his friends and family.

He contracted dysentery, a bowel disease, and because the living was so poor and the food so coarse, nothing they could do seemed to help him.

He passed away in Salt Lake City, July 6, 1850, at the age of 51 years, 9 months and 5 days. He was buried in the Salt Lake City Cemetery, where a specially prepared red sandstone marker, the first of its kind was placed in his memory.

Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah p 1011

Lott, Cornelius P., son of Peter Lott and Mary Jane Smyle of Holland, born 27 Sep. 1798, came to Utah Sep. 1847.

Married Permelia Darrow, daughter of Joseph Darrow and Mary Ward. Their children: Melissa, mrd. Ira Willes; John S., Mary E., mrd Abraham Lossee; Almira H. Mrd J. R. Murdock; Jane mrd Abram Hatch; Alzina L. Mrd Sidney Willes; Manda; Josephp Peter, mrd Sarah Snot; Cornelius; Benjamin S; married Mary A. Evans. Benjamin born 16 Nov 1849 Salt Lake City.

Typed by Kathleen Jardine Woolf Oct. 2002 Idaho Falls, Id.

Information from books published and LDS records.